

**RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SAA'S 2010 BOARD OF TRUSTEES
FOLLOWING AN INTERNAL REVIEW CONDUCTED IN 2009-2010**

Submitted by Paul Yachnin, Chair of the Review Committee
and President, 2009-2010

At the annual meeting in Washington DC, 9-11 April 2009, the Board of Trustees agreed in principle to initiate a review of the SAA. The review mandate, process, and purpose were refined in email exchanges in the wake of the meeting. At the conclusion of those electronic discussions, it was agreed

- (1) that the review process should remain internal to the Association and be of the nature of a self-study
- (2) that the committee should consider the activities and policies of the SAA and propose changes and new initiatives where these might be deemed beneficial
- (3) that the review committee should include Vice-President Russ McDonald, President Paul Yachnin (Chair), immediate Past President Coppélia Kahn, and next-to-immediate Past President Peter Holland
- (4) that the committee should consult widely with the membership of the Association
- (5) that the particular questions discussed within the committee and among the membership should bear on the timing and location of the annual conference, the organization of the conference program, the website, the various internal and external initiatives undertaken by the Association, and any other matter of concern that occurred to the members of the committee or the membership (see the Consultation document, Appendix III Part B)
- (6) that the completed review report should be submitted to the Trustees for their consideration, and that they should determine what actions, if any, were to be taken on account of the Report's recommendations
- (7) that the report was to be submitted to the Board in advance of the 2010 meeting in Chicago, so as to allow for email exchanges before the meeting and face-to-face discussion at the meeting itself

In order for the committee to be able to consult broadly with the membership, a list of interviewees was compiled that included the seminar leaders for the previous two years and an additional group, nominated by the Trustees, made up of members at all career stages. The total number of SAA members who were consulted was 184; 112 responses were received (61% response rate). Two clear benefits of the review, already realized, are that over a hundred members took part in thinking about the SAA's future and also learned a great deal about how the Association works.

The committee members prepared reports on the responses they had received and exchanged them in advance of their meeting (see Appendices). Peter Holland, Coppélia Kahn, and Russ McDonald met on February 12-13; Lena Orlin joined the meetings as an advisor; Paul Yachnin chaired by teleconference hook-up. The discussions followed the order of the original consultation document.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. THE TIMING AND LOCATION OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The great majority of respondents, including those who would have preferred to be at home at Easter (or Passover, when those two holidays coincide), agreed that the present arrangement, with two out of three conferences taking place at Easter and the third at a location with lower hotel rates, was the fairest and most advantageous for the membership, and especially important for keeping the conference affordable for graduate students and underemployed members.

Several respondents said that they had not previously understood the challenges involved in scheduling the conference and keeping it within the reach of all SAA members. The committee therefore recommends

- (1) that an explanation about the timing (two out of three years at Easter) and location of the annual conference be posted on the FAQ on the website

II. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE PROGRAM AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

Respondents expressed many different opinions about the program and offered many valuable ideas about possible improvements. There was near unanimity about the value and productivity of the seminars, which were said to be the heart of the conference and its most successful element. It was clear from all accounts that the seminars work very well as they are presently organized. The only area where we thought improvement was needed had to do with the ability of auditors to profit from the seminars (without of course impinging on their essential character). In order to help auditors prepare for seminars, the committee recommends

- (2) that, as far as possible, titles and abstracts should be posted on the website in advance of the meeting; seminar leaders and members should be encouraged to submit their titles and abstracts for this purpose, but it should not be made a formal requirement

While some rethinking of the panels seems warranted, the committee agreed that, in order to maintain a high degree of common focus, the program should never have more than two panels at a time. The committee felt that efforts should be made to extend the collaborative research and productive discussion characteristic of the seminars to the panel presentations. We agreed that the panel presentations might contribute more to the overall work of the conference if there was more variety in the format of presentations, a somewhat greater degree of coherence and connection among their areas of interest (not, however, to the point of prescribing a conference theme), more time for discussion after presentations, and a somewhat higher degree of critical self-consciousness. To those ends, we recommend

- (3) that the Program Committee consider alternative formats to the three-twenty-minute-paper model, including roundtables; debate-style sessions; single-paper sessions, possibly by a major external scholar, possibly with a respondent, and possibly issuing in a special publication; performance-oriented sessions; and sessions that combine performance and scholarship

(4) that the Program Committee consider developing lines of thematic, theoretical, or methodological connection among some panel presentations; this could be done both by way of recruitment of particular presenters and groups of presenters and by cultivating thematic links among panels

(5) that the Program Committee encourage some presenters, possibly those at the plenary, to develop a metacritical element in their presentations able to address the institutional and social history and present situation of Shakespeare scholarship and performance

(6) that the Program Committee experiment with a post-panel roundtable event, where the presenters could sit down with approximately 50 colleagues (depending on available space) to continue the Q&A and to discuss the papers and the issues they addressed; it might be helpful to include a respondent to get the discussion going and a moderator to help keep it on track

(7) that the Association experiment with a post-seminar cash bar intended to provide ample, congenial space for continuing discussions among the seminarians

The committee discussed the overall importance and value of the SAA's support of younger scholars, which was a feature of the Association that received very substantial praise from the respondents. Specifically, we discussed graduate student participation in the seminars. We felt that their contributions are in general very valuable, but agreed that there was some evidence that students not yet at the dissertation stage are enrolling in the seminars. Since there is already a policy in place that requires students to be at the dissertation stage in order to take part in seminars and since we believe that it is a good idea to emphasize the serious nature of the work that goes in the seminars, we recommend

(8) that students wishing to enroll in a seminar must have their thesis supervisors attest to the fact that they are at the dissertation stage; an email from their supervisor to the SAA office will suffice

We agreed that the SAA could build on its history of support of graduate students and younger scholars and extend that kind of support to members at all career stages by instituting an annual "Profession" workshop. Accordingly, we recommend

(9) that the Association sponsor an annual "Profession" event, which could take a number of different forms depending on the preference of the person charged with organizing it, but which would in every case address important aspects of professional life for members at one or another career stage (or at all career stages), such as "how to get published," "teaching and research," "bringing Shakespeare scholarship to the public," and "how to do collaborative research"; the "Profession" workshop should be supplemental to the program so that those who attend are not prohibited from taking part in another seminar or workshop, or in a paper session

The committee discussed the importance of the opening reception to the success of the conference and the fact that some venues are better than others at raising local money to pay for the reception. We also took into account the fact that the total fees paid often don't cover the actual cost of the

conference. In light of possible shortfalls, the importance of the reception, and the affordability of the SAA conference vis-à-vis other conferences, we recommend

(10) that the meeting registration fee be raised to \$110 (from \$100) and the late fee be raised to \$130 (from \$125)

Current policy is that seminars are scheduled at the end of the day; the idea is that discussion can then continue over drinks or dinner. We discussed the idea of having two seminar slots on two days of the conference, with the earlier seminars perhaps scheduled directly before lunch (so that the same principle could obtain). This would have a beneficial impact on site planning. Many hotels are now ruled out because they don't have enough small seminar rooms for us. At present, with (say) 51 seminars distributed over three days (double sessions included), we need 17 seminar rooms. With 55 seminars distributed over five seminar slots, we would need just 11 seminar rooms. We therefore recommend

(11) that the Association consider arranging the program so that there are two groups of seminars scheduled on each of two days of the conference

III. THE WEBSITE

A great majority of respondents was pleased with the renovated website, and several were pleased to find resources on the site that they hadn't known existed. A few of our correspondents noted gaps in the site and/or provided valuable suggestions for its further improvement, which we have passed along to Bailey Yeager, whose initiative and creative work has brought us the renovated site we now have. There are a number of recommendations that relate directly to the website or that address other areas of concern by suggesting changes to the website that may be conveniently listed here:

(12) that the website accommodate credit-card donations to the SAA; a feature of the link for secure donations should be that the donor can print off a charitable donation receipt for tax purposes

(13) that information about how plenaries are chosen should be included among guidelines for program proposals, or among the FAQs

(14) that there should be a link to members of the Program Committee, to allow program proposals to be forwarded directly

(15) that the website feature links to Shakespeare-related organizations and events world-wide; the links page would feature a disclaimer to the effect that the SAA does not endorse any of the organizations or events with which it is linked and that it exercises its right to include only appropriate links; the links page will be monitored by the President

(16) that the SAA phase out the paper Bulletin; this should be done in stages—first by offering members the choice to have only the online Bulletin; then by phasing out the paper Bulletin entirely, with warnings given by general emailings over the course of a year, which announce that the Bulletin has been posted online, that it is also being sent out in hard copy to those who have not opted for electronic copy only, and that the hard-copy mailing will be ending by a certain date

(17) that the SAA phase out paper ballots for elections, but retain the option for members to submit their votes in hard copy; members will be able to do this simply by printing the online ballot and sending it by regular mail to the SAA offices

(18) that the SAA seek to create an online directory of members; the SAA staff will investigate whether the costs of printing and mailing a hard-copy directory offset the costs of installing security for an online directory

IV. INTERNAL INITIATIVES

There was broad and enthusiastic support for recently adopted initiatives such as conference travel grants for graduate students, research travel grants for “the underemployed,” and the Leeds Barroll Dissertation Prize. The committee received very many suggestions for new initiatives, including a number that recommended a “best essay by a graduate student in a seminar” award. However, the committee felt that this would be very difficult to administer or to judge in a timely and equitable way. The committee did discuss a number of possible new awards, including “best first book” and “best first article” prizes but reached no strong consensus on the value or practicability of such awards.

V. EXTERNAL INITIATIVES

There was a mixture of views from respondents about external, usually understood as international, initiatives. Some respondents felt that the SAA should focus its attention on Shakespearean work in America (meaning mostly the USA and Canada). Some of those were concerned about a possible colonialist dimension to SAA international initiatives. Some were strongly supportive of external and international initiatives. The committee was generally enthusiastic about external initiatives provided that they did not distract the Association from its primary areas of responsibility. In addition to including links to international Shakespeare organizations and events (see recommendation 15), we recommend

(19) that the Program Committee experiment with international, online seminars, where one group at the annual meeting conducts a seminar with a group outside North America by way of electronic video conferencing; the SAA half of the seminar might assemble not at the conference hotel but instead at a local university, to take advantage of communications equipment there

(20) that the Program Committee consider including a panel on international Shakespeare and/or a panel on scholarly and theatrical work on Shakespeare within a particular national Shakespeare community

VI. ANY OTHER SUGGESTIONS OR COMMENTS

There were some additional suggestions, but none appealing or cogent enough to win the support of the committee.

VII. SPONSORED RECEPTIONS

Independently of the survey, the committee discussed sponsored receptions, where a publisher covers the costs of a reception open to the members of the Association in order to launch a new publication. There have been a few of these in the past several years. The committee thought that they are generally valuable to all concerned, since the members are able to enjoy a social event for which they do not have to pay and since the publishers have access to a large group of the leading Shakespeareans in the world and also have the use of a space for free. The committee agreed that these receptions are worthwhile and should be continued, but that it would be useful to have in place the two following guidelines:

(20) that sponsored receptions must be cost-free to the SAA

(21) that the receptions should remain primarily social events for the members of the SAA, as opposed to marketing opportunities for the publishers; indeed, we felt strongly that a sponsored social event that is enjoyable and free from intrusive advertising is likely also to be successful from a marketing point of view; accordingly, the lights must not be dimmed during the reception (which publishers might want to do in order to present video advertising for their publications); and remarks by the editor, author, or publisher, if they are included at all, should be kept brief, and should in no case be longer than five minutes

VIII. FOLLOW-UP

As mentioned above, the Trustees will determine what actions, if any, are to be taken on account of the Report's recommendations. However, the committee requests

(22) that the President be charged with the task of informing those members of the Association who responded to the review survey about the outcome of the review process

APPENDIX I

Invitation to SAA Members Consulted

The Shakespeare Association of America is among the best-run, most productive, collegial, and enjoyable academic organizations in the world. We are undertaking this review because the SAA is approaching its 40th year and it seems like a good time to take stock, have a steady look at what we have done, what we are doing, and how we might do things even better. Also the organization has grown very considerably over the last few years—from 967 in 2004-5 to 1,421 in 2008-9. Essentially the SAA has been joined by a new generation of young scholars as well as by an increasing number of colleagues from outside North America. In light of these increasing numbers and the possibility of a certain diminishment in the sense of common cause and collegiality, this review is intended to canvas colleagues about their ideas and aspirations for the SAA. We hope that it will serve to inform many members about how the organization works and that it will engender a conversation about the broader goals of the SAA that will also serve to preserve and deepen the spirit of collegiality that is one of the hallmarks of the Association.

The review committee includes Vice-President Russ McDonald, President Paul Yachnin (Chair), immediate Past President Coppélia Kahn, and next-to-immediate Past President Peter Holland.

The Committee is consulting broadly with members of the Association (approximately 185 members at all career stages) as part of its work toward reporting to the Board of Trustees on the activities and policies of the SAA and to propose changes and new initiatives where they might be deemed beneficial.

Please take some time to answer the following questions:

1. The timing and location of the annual conference

At present, we hold two out of every three meetings at Easter. Hotels are relatively inexpensive at Easter, which means that two out of three meetings are held in popular venues (like Washington or Chicago). Every third meeting is held not at Easter; those years we meet in less popular venues, since the hotel rates in the more attractive cities are more than we are used to paying. Note that in places like Washington or Chicago, hotel rates would be \$80-\$100 more per guest per night for non-Easter meetings.

There are three main possible options. Please feel most welcome to comment on each or any one of them and/or to indicate your preference:

- We could continue with the present policy.
- We might decide to not ever hold the conference at Easter and also to hold it in popular venues. This means that we would pay higher rates for our accommodation. Note also that one meeting at a higher room rate would make it virtually impossible to secure lower rates for subsequent meetings since the hotel chains have a close look at any organization's past practice when they negotiate rates.

- We could hold all our meetings at Easter, which would allow us both to stay in popular venues and to keep costs down, but which would also raise objections from a number of members who would like to spend at least one Easter (sometimes Passover) out of three with family and/or in worship.

2. The organization of the program at the annual meeting

Please give some thought to the way the program at the annual meeting is organized. In your view, what parts of the program (seminars, panels, roundtables, special presentations) work best? Are there other elements that work less well? Might there be room for a large round-table or for a single lecture? Are there other alternatives or possibilities that you would like to see considered?

3. The website

We have recently completed the initial phase of a renovation of the SAA website. Please have a look at the website: Please tell us how you think we are doing with the renovation? Are there ways that you can think of to make the website even better?

4. Internal initiatives

The SAA has recently undertaken initiatives such as conference travel grants for graduate students, research travel grants for “the underemployed,” and the Leeds Barroll Dissertation Prize. Are we going in the right direction with these initiatives? Are there other ways that you think the SAA might foster younger and less advantaged members of the profession?

5. External initiatives

At the request of colleagues in India, the SAA recently participated in a conference in Jadavpur, India by encouraging North American scholars to participate (those who did participate paid their own way). Are we going in the right direction with this initiative? Are there other ways that you think the SAA might contribute to research and teaching of Shakespeare in places other than North America?

6. Any other suggestions or comments

Are there any other areas in which you could see room for new initiatives or opportunities for the improvement of our existing practices and policies?

APPENDIX II

Reports on SAA Members' Survey 2010**A. Report of Peter Holland**

Respondents (24 total): Stephen Guy-Bray, Stuart Hampton-Reeves, Elizabeth Williamson, M. J. Kidnie, Zoltan Markus, Bill Germano, Laurie Osborne, Mark Rankin, Tom Cartelli, Anne Coldiron, Chris Pye, Meredith Evans, Deanne Williams, Bill Ingram, Vin Nardizzi, Amy Scott-Douglass, Heather Hirschfield, Tony Dawson, Frank Whigham, Conal Condren, Kirk Hendershott-Kraetzer, Kathleen Lynch, Jennifer Low, Erin Kelly

On all fronts there was general satisfaction and agreement. I've excerpted comments sensible and less so and occasionally added a comment in square brackets. Few had anything to say about the website or external initiatives – what they did say was mostly positive.

1. The timing and location of the annual conference

- Right time of year but no hotels miles from town. Downtown if possible.
- Reports of problems finding Kosher food for Passover.
- Accessibility and affordability more important than location.
- I'd pay more for non-Easter meetings.
- Try holding a meeting in UK (compare RSA).
- Low costs are vital – “I know I have zero travel funding for 2010-11, so no SAA for me!”
- Try some virtual conference events [others voiced the same thought].
- Easter good because often overlaps with a teaching break – vital if one is employed at a small college with a heavy load.
- Big cities are also cheaper to travel to; costs when there are multiple flights to smaller locations need to be considered. [a repeated concern].
- Remember the charm of less “popular” venues.
- Include a second, cheaper hotel in the plans.
- Cut back on receptions to save money.

2. The organization of the program

- More variety in format for plenaries. Conference lacks a keynote event.
- Key president's address to other presentations. Need clearer focus for “the ‘big ticket’ presentations.”
- Panels give sense of where discipline is heading while seminars allow for strong personal connections.
- Roundtables usually too unstructured.
- Keep seminar sizes small – ideally 12-15.
- Test-drive a kind of seminar meeting more than once (e.g. three-day pattern of Comp Lit Assoc); could be more of a Study Group selected by convenor [No!!].
- Roundtable or panel on best work of last 3 years or reconsidering works over 50 years old (Wilson Knight, Granville Barker).
- More workshops on new skills and areas of expertise.
- Encourage co-convening of seminars to link less experienced with more experienced members.

- Prefer democratic seminars to the cult-of-celebrity panels but would like to see 2-3 45-minute papers, perhaps drawn exclusively from open submission competition.
- Too many 20-min papers are “too casually put together,” perhaps because format is too brief.
- More roundtables – but without mini-lectures within them. They should be structured to produce real disagreement – “we tend to shy away from...occasionally contentious critical engagement” but we should encourage events that are deliberately allowing for opposing viewpoints.
- Make seminars even smaller: 8-10.
- Fewer papers and more seminars.
- Seminar auditing doesn’t work well (as if one is “spying on a Facebook conversation between other people’s Friends”). Conveners should involve auditors more.
- More special events and presentations (films, plays, etc).
- Plenary shouldn’t be so early on Friday and there should be more 40-minute lectures.
- A single, annual “big ticket” lecture, held in an evening.
- No single plenary speaker and no multiple sessions for the same seminar.
- More workshops.
- More targeted seminars (like the “theatre history” one), with more scholars invited to organize them.
- To help younger scholars, a boiler-plate explanation of what seminars do and why they matter (some places won’t fund students for seminar participation – a clear statement of scholarly worth might help).
- Seminars could be explicitly “venues for seeing new projects,” e.g., by collaborating on annotated bibliographies, identifying online resources, providing “big-picture meditations on a topic.”
- Help young scholars to publish by “inviting journal editors and publishers and encouraging them to invite Submissions.”

3. The website

- More use of website “as a more expanded archive of its own work.” Have abstracts for panels as well as seminars [supported by others].
- No snail-mailings in future to save money. Everything on the web. “The trees would approve.”
- Add explanation of why Easter timing is favored.
- More interactivity – a commentary page, a blog, a chatroom, a facebook page.
- Password-protected access to papers from conference.
- E-mail lists for seminar conveners; wiki space for up- and down-loading seminar papers.

4. Internal initiatives

- Panels of advice for job-seekers would be helpful [a number offered a version of this].
- Room-share initiative very good in tough economic times.
- Even wider spread of membership/registration fees would be good.
- More help for grad students about jobs; they know too little about “the kinds of expectations they will meet up with when they interview at small colleges.”
- Consider book/article prizes.
- A first book prize.
- Tax issues over grants – they are taxable income and one would have to pay \$300 taxes on \$1k grant – perhaps SAA should get receipts for only 70% of the funding to allow for taxes [surely this would be illegal for us to do as accounting failure but the point is not silly].

- Grants “help the organization foster a sense of belonging; I will support an organization that has supported me.”
- Help access to archival tools (such as EEBO) through a “public option” for access, perhaps by collaborating with other disciplines (e.g. History)

5. External initiatives

- Why bother? We’re not a missionary organization.
- Focus should stay in North America.
- Inform members of other international conferences.
- Use website to allow for calls for papers from conferences in North America and beyond.
- Seek more formal ties with ISA, ESRA, BSA, DSG – perhaps a trustee to maintain and develop contacts.
- More publicity for international conference opportunities.
- ESRA was wonderful: the Europeans are “more intellectually diverse and sophisticated than a great many of my [UK/US] colleagues; they weren’t constrained by the limiting nature of fashions and orthodoxies that beset [us].”
- A book-sending drive for developing world - costly but could be of great help, especially to secondary schools as much as colleges.
- Invite more global scholars to conferences.
- International virtual conferences rather than larger carbon footprints.
- Make it more ad hoc than official (no neo-colonialism).
- An international liaison subcommittee.

6. Other suggestions

- Ask seminar convenors for report of discussion which could be archived on website.
- Share seminar best practices [Lena does this extensively already!]
- Conference is getting bigger and that’s daunting for grad students. Nothing to be done – a consequence of success.
- More social trips (memories of Ann Cook organizing trips to Grand ‘Ol Opry). A trip to Pike Street Market in Seattle, please!
- SAA could act as an umbrella for smaller, more focused meeting [not clear if this meant regional or focused by topic].
- “The SAA is one of the foundations of my professional life.”

B. Report of Coppélia Kahn

Respondents (15 total): Alan Galey (Toronto), Michael Shurgot (South Puget Sound Community College), Elizabeth Spiller (Florida State), Richard Dutton (Ohio State), James Siemon (Boston University), Ruth Morse (Université de Paris- Diderot), Kevin Curran (Toronto), Melissa Sanchez (U Penn), Rebecca Totaro (Florida Gulf Coast U), Jean Howard (Columbia U), Douglas Bruster (U Texas), Sara Deats (U of S. Florida), Jane Hwang Degenhardt (U Mass-Amherst), Susan Greenhalgh (Roehampton Institute), Stephen Booth (UC-Berkeley)

1. The timing and location of the annual conference

The overwhelming majority likes the current arrangement. No one wanted to change to Easter every year, and two said never meeting at Easter was a bad idea.

Comments:

- Our hotels are much better than RSA's; cheaper rates allow younger scholars better access and thus foster growth of SAA.
- As a non-American attendee the current policy works well for me.
- If SAA had been any more expensive than it has been, my participation would have been impossible [from a community college teacher].
- The single most important consideration for me is cost [from a European member who has no travel subsidy].
- Cheap rates are key to younger members being able to come.
- I find the elements of tourism intriguing, and I have enjoyed visiting different cities.
- I find it refreshing to attend meetings in more unusual places.
- I do like the idea of having the conference at the same time each year [but] it is a bit of an inconvenience to have SAA so close to RSA.
- An all-Easter policy would probably work well. Most SAA members are flexible about spending Easter at home.
- Question: are low rates available at other times of the year?

2. The organization of the program

The majority enthusiastically approves the current arrangement.

Comments:

- "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."
- Our program is a model that similar organizations have imitated.
- Giving junior faculty and graduate students a chance to be in the spotlight at a plenary session is a good idea.
- I like best the general sessions with three speakers working on a particular topic or theme.
- The seminars of course are the most unique feature [sic] of the SAA . . . [they] provide wonderful learning environments, and at times, create spaces where genuinely path-breaking ideas can be fostered.
- The backbone of SAA is the seminars . . . those which have usually worked best have been those with most work before the meeting.
- I have participated in a seminar every year I have attended, and I find this format by far the most collegial.
- I very much like . . . a variety of forums—seminars, workshops, special presentations, etc.

Suggestions:

- Post abstracts of seminar papers on website; make handouts of abstracts at seminar meetings mandatory; put post-seminar reports on website.
- I think large roundtables with really controversial topics would be a lot of fun. Put them in the after lunch hour to wake us up.

- “Shakespeare in Performance” does not receive as much emphasis as it should I would like to see at least one special session on “Shakespeare in Performance” at every meeting Also, more workshops on performing Shakespeare.
- I would suggest scrapping the large lectures in a room of 400+ and offering instead several smaller panels or round tables where dialogue is possible.

3. The website

Everyone who commented on the new website liked it.

Suggestions:

- Resources for grad students are “buried behind several clicks” and should be made more accessible.
- Add more public outreach.

4. Internal initiatives

The majority approves. One person thinks they’re a bad idea (!).

Comments:

- To graduate students, SAA stands out among similar organizations as more welcoming.
- Re an essay contest: don’t create any more prizes, because they would generate bad feelings among the losers, and they require too much work from the judges.
- SAA is not the place to foster the young Learned societies cannot change the job market.
- I think we should do more of this, if possible.

Suggestions:

- Perhaps SAA could find ways to encourage senior faculty, especially at smaller institutions, to find professional development dollars for deserving and promising faculty to attend conferences such as SAA.
- An annual prize for first books.
- A special panel or venue for rewarding the best work.

5. External initiatives

Many didn’t comment; some said they didn’t have enough information to be able to comment. Five respondents approved; two others were “cautious” in their approval.

Comments:

- I think it is the mission of the SAA to foster Shakespeare work across the globe . . . but I don’t think any great outreach should be part of that mission.
- I think it likely to be more useful to help scholars come to SAA than to try to make SAA an export.
- We cannot be all things to all scholars . . . I would concentrate on . . . ways to attract more teachers / scholars from smaller schools [in the US]
- SAA should resist co-organizing with ESRA (European Shakespeare Research Association) [because] it is too small, too dependent upon a few active members, and too various in standard and orientation.

Suggestions:

- Publicize these initiatives by sending information to a listserv.
- Post them on the website.
- Encourage international scholars to join SAA.
- Environmental considerations / carbon footprint are a concern. Investigate the possibility of streaming conferences on the web.
- I like the idea of holding a conference in Greece with a focus on the Greek and Roman plays, or one in Italy with focus on Shakespeare's Italian plays.

5. Other suggestions or comments

- I would like to see more emphasis on pedagogy. Perhaps SAA could work with the Shakespeare Trust in Stratford-upon-Avon to re-create the international conferences on teaching Shakespeare that were held in the 90s there. They were top-notch!

C. Report of Russ McDonald

Respondents (36 total): William Carroll, Andreas Hoefele, Jyotsna Singh, Robert Watson, Joel Slotkin, Allison Hobgood, Rich McCoy, Mary Ellen Lamb, David Hillman, Adam Zucker, Heather Hirschfeld, Wendy Hyman, Gina Bloom, Jonathan Burton, Julie Sanders, David Wood, Kate Rumbold, Gitanjali Shahani, Sharon O'Dair, Chris Crosbie, Melissa Sanchez, Lois Potter, Stephen Foley, James Mardock, Marissa Greenberg, Ed Gieskes, Jean Feerick, Helen Ostovich, Mary Fuller, Joe Navitsky, Bill Kerwin, Ron Conkie, Kaara Peterson, Bradley Greenburg, Catherine Belsey

1. The timing and location of the annual conference

- Keep present system as compromise.
- Same as above. I am more troubled by the Fairmount addiction than by the Easter timing.
- Prefers 'less palatial digs'. [I prefer more palatial.]
- Same as above. Likes interesting cities, and likes being downtown. Urges return to New Orleans.
- No problem with current policy.
- 2 out of 3 Easters very inconvenient. Preferably move it away from Easter, even with higher prices.
- "Discriminatory to those who practice Christianity." Doesn't care about city: in hotel all the time anyway.
- Torn in allegiances owing to Easter and owing to proximity of RSA.
- Continue present policy. Lists problems with either extreme.
- Present policy allows younger, poorer people to attend.
- Continue present.
- UK participant likes the present policy because UK schools always off at Easter.
- Present policy a good compromise.
- Try to avoid Easter/Passover or move to 1 in 3 for Easter, even if prices increase.
- If we want to limit the size of the organization, then changing away from Easter is the diplomatic way to do so.
- Likes present policy and would not mind doing Easter every year.
- Doesn't mind present policy but could we move it up a day to allow people to get home?

- Why not conferences in the summer months? Mid-May or late May. Would not support moving *all* meetings to Easter.
- Would personally prefer all Easter but likes present policy.
- Serious problems because of Passover and because of the RSA. Put a month between?
- Observes Passover but is content with the present system.
- Observes Passover but is content with the present system. However, says that we might make our reasoning explicit for the membership.
- Happy with current arrangements.
- Continue present policy.
- Happy with current system.
- Likes the present system. Wants more West Coast cities.
- Keep costs down so keep what we've got.
- Present system seems practical and fair.
- Hold to present system.
- Continue with current policy.
- Present system works: attendance high; less interesting cities are interesting; costs kept down.
- I would generally support cheap as more democratic.

2. The organization of the program at the annual meeting

- Seminars the heart of the meeting. Like paper competition. More of this?
- Likes the structure. Likes the idea of a plenary address. DJ over band for dance.
- Seminars the primary experience. Best seminars have focused topics (Greene, Jonson).
- Auditing seminars not worthwhile.
- Seminars work best. Workshops amusing and excellent. Roundtables need small audience.
- Retain small number of panels. Single lectures? Some good, some bad.
- Special performances and such: wants more of this.
- Wants full disclosure on plenary panel. Chosen from all? Then say so on website.
- Loves seminars. Likes plenary panels as “thought provoking.” Disapproves of single lecture as not collaborative. Would like to follow films or evening presentations with a roundtable of scholars or practitioners.
- Do not divide seminars. “It might be worthwhile to work in more panels or other audience friendly sessions, possibly even concurrently with seminars, so that those of us who audient because we're at loose ends would have something else to do.”
- Person has a lot to say about good and bad sessions, without coming to clear conclusion.
- Seminars the major attraction. Dislikes microphone set-up. More power point for environment.
- Current mix of formats is effective, although add a roundtable. Can we post the abstracts of seminars in advance?
- While I would love to make suggestions for improvement, keep the current system in place.
- Likes seminars; doesn't want a single lecture; more options in the open submission category.
- Perhaps have a call for papers. “Might there be more creative or innovative ways of facilitating productive discussion even for those not committed to a seminar—say, in smaller follow-up groups after a large plenary session (the size of which can often forbid discussion)?”
- Likes seminars, but doesn't like auditing. Wants a choice in panels (i.e. no plenary).
- No more than 2 competing panels. Suggests a way of combining blind submission with a star scholar, so that you get both celebrity and novelty.

- Excellence of seminars. More guidance for leaders. Our program is “needlessly opaque.” We need fuller description of seminar. “The transparency problem applies to other aspects of SAA literature as well.”
- Loves seminars. Ran one badly. Try to reduce seminar size. Hates 9:00 plenary. Likes roundtable idea. Would like a single lecture.
- “There is no other conference I know of that is structured as well as this one.”
- “A large roundtable would be worth experimenting with. I’m not in favor of a single lecture.”
- Roundtable frustrating: not enough said about any one view. Splendid format: don’t change it.
- Happy with status quo. Excellent roundtable on teaching in San Diego.
- Seminars best part. Can we open up panels to young people? Same people despite 2-year rule.
- Seminars often feel inadequate owing to little prep. “The one thing I’d like to see is more unscripted panel discussions on particular topics of current interest by a few experts worth listening to.”
- Process of giving papers should be more consistent and open. People can send papers, but the selection are made by a process whereby there is a kind of “in-crowd” who can propose panels, so there is not much space for open submissions.
- “I have chaired 5 seminars over the years.” “It would be nice to have a round-table at the end of the conference, a kind of recapitulation of the issues discussed and future directions.”
- Seminars and panels work well, but I feel that there should also be room for a couple of plenary lectures, possibly from non-specialist major intellectuals.
- We should continue with a plenary session. My greatest complaint is that the usual suspects show up every year. Maybe the paper embargo should be every three years, but every other year for seminars.

3. The website

Nothing much to report here, so I’m not going to type the same affirmative things over and over.

4. Internal initiatives

- More and larger grants.
- Cut costs. Like Kalamazoo.
- More grants. Reduced conference fees for the underemployed?
- All this excellent.
- Reduce amount of red tape. Remove DGS from letter.
- Add a panel at meeting at which travel-grant recipients share their findings.
- One or two seminar slots to showcase new work.
- Some sort of essay contest. Each seminar leader nominates an essay by non-tenured people.
- But this is a lot of work.
- Provide new members and graduate students with a what-to-expect packet.
- Something for “in between scholars,” i.e. not those at Graduate Breakfast but not geezers.
- First book prize.
- Encourage young people by holding costs down.
- Bravo.
- Invite Plenary speakers to Graduate Breakfast.
- YES!YES!YES!
- Travel grants less necessary owing to internet, but dissertation prize a great idea.
- Grants for scholars from Eastern Europe?

- Pause for a brief period and see if these programs are working. Pool for registration fees for unemployed scholars.

5. External initiatives

- Making travel funds available to non-US scholars is a good thing.
- Bring 3 or 4 scholars from Asia and Africa to the SAA every year. “There could even be a standing panel on teaching/researching Shakespeare beyond the English speaking world.”
- If funding permitted, it would be terrific to offer exchanges or short fellowships.
- This is the realm of the ISA and the cost would be prohibitive.
- Might there be a way to combine the interests of questions 4 and 5, such as grants for graduate students and untenured faculty to attend future international collaborations?
- We risk becoming yet another example of North American cultural hegemony.
- Prefer exchanges facilitated by video conferencing and podcast. Don’t want to duplicate the ISA.
- Publicize SAA initiatives more.
- Might want to allocate travel funds to allow travel *to* the SAA from these places.
- Publicize to the membership the opportunities for attending conferences in far-flung places.
- Perhaps invite more global scholars to speak at the SAA conference.
- More linking with international Shakespeare organizations, esp. the BSA.
- Involve Japan.
- Virtual conferences?
- Concentrate on supporting disadvantaged US scholars before moving international.
- The SAA needs to focus on the A. Maybe help isolated places to get access to Shakespeare databases.
- I don’t see that people interested in attending conferences abroad need the SAA as a travel agency.
- Don’t provide funds to bring international speakers to the conference. Consider using the Phi Beta Kappa travelling speakers.

6. Any other suggestions or comments

- The one conference I will not miss.
- A fantastic conference.
- I miss the more intimate gatherings and seminars with 10 and 12 participants.
- Thank you.
- My one big desire for the future would be to see environmental responsibility built into the design of events as suggested above.
- Developing a greater sense of community between conferences (website). Between-conference seminars and talks under the auspices of the SAA. More collaboration with international orgs.
- More to incorporate secondary educators and to bridge the gap between high school and university educators.
- Invite only graduate students at the dissertation phase. Lowers quality when younger scholars participate.
- DANCE: move it out of a huge ballroom, perhaps even off hotel property. DJ only. Very important feature.
- General reception: move to Friday night.
- My concern is that the organization will become too big, like the RSA.
- Perhaps greater international involvement at the organizational level of the SAA.

- I wouldn't change too much.
- My favorite academic conference.
- More workshops on technology. More transparency in selection of panels. More stipends for graduate students. Fund raiser DURING the conference instead of asking for money later.

D. Report of Paul Yachnin

Respondents (38 total): Ian Munro (UC Irvine), Richard Preiss (Utah), Holger Syme (Toronto), Michael Best (Victoria), John Cox (Hope College), Julie Crawford (Columbia), Phebe Jensen (Utah State), Gloria Olchowy (Grant MacEwan College, Edmonton), Susan Frye (U of Wyoming), Barbara Hodgdon (Michigan), Laurie Shannon (Northwestern), Zach Lesser (Penn), Cyrus Mulready, Catherine Nicholson (Yale), Jennifer Feather (UNC at Greensboro), Gavin Paul (Simon Fraser), Garrett Sullivan (Penn State), Meredith Skura (Rice), Alysia Kolentsis (Stanford), Erin Ellerbeck (Toronto), Katie Larson (Toronto), Rob Carson (Hobart and William Smith Colleges), Ann Thompson (King's College), Michelle Dowd (UNC Greensboro), Farah Kareem-Cooper (Shakespeare's Globe), Jeremy Lopez (Toronto), Lars Engle (Tulsa), Anne Lancashire (Toronto), Susanne Wofford (NYU), Paul Werstine (Western Ontario), Leeds Barroll, Amy Scott (McGill), Jeff Doty (West Texas A&M), Elizabeth Hanson (Queen's), Kelly Stage (Ripon College), Diana Henderson (MIT), Helga Duncan (Stonehill College), Ann Jennalie Cook

1. The timing and location of the annual conference

The great majority approved the current practice of scheduling the conference.

Comments:

- I'd favor annual Easter meetings, PLUS the preservation of a sense of adventure by meeting sometimes outside the usual haunts and familiar circuits.
- In the past, if I've found conference hotels to be cost prohibitive, I look for cheaper hotels within walking distance (this is a standard strategy for grad students, I think). Keeping the conference in major cities the majority of the time thus not only helps reduce the cost of otherwise expensive conference hotels, it also increases the odds of staying at (cheaper) alternate locations within a downtown core.
- A mid-to-late March date would rule out most UK attendees who cannot get away during the teaching term.
- I'm never unhappy when SAA is in a place I haven't been before and have never had any very strong hankering to go to, and if we find ourselves in Indianapolis or Las Vegas . . . I'll be pleased rather than disgruntled.
- As a graduate student moving into the job market in the next few years, I do not have the funds to pay high rates for accommodation.
- Frequently, I have a rather hectic SAA trying to balance the commitments of the conference and attending worship services in the conference locations. Moreover, this compromise does not substitute being with my own worship community during this important moment in the sacred calendar

Suggestions:

- My vote would be for a fourth option: I'd rather see it alternate between Easter and non-Easter dates every year, rather than the current 2:1 ratio. I enjoy going to big cities at discount rates, but I also enjoy getting out of the usual conference venues and going to interesting smaller places for a change of pace.
- I would also be happy with an option 4 (one Easter meeting every three years, the other two in smaller places) if it turns out that we have a lot of members who object to Easter/Passover meetings.
- I think we really must return to New Orleans several times in the near future.
- I would like to see the SAA do some market research among members to find out how Chicago and Washington stack up against, say, Albuquerque, San Diego, or Dallas. I very much enjoy the lesser-known places, and the SAA is not so big that it can't go to those places.
- Perhaps the frequency of non-Easter weekends could be increased, though, to two of every five years?
- I wonder if, once you've made a decision about scheduling, you might add to the "Annual Meeting" tab a section on "How the meeting is scheduled." The grumbling on this issue among SAA members would probably disappear if the timing/money scheduling dilemma was more broadly publicized.

2. The organization of the program

The majority enthusiastically approves the current arrangement.

Comments:

- Presentations and performances by artists, from novelists to musicians to actors, add a welcome dimension to the more strictly academic focus of the seminars and panels.
- I like roundtables, anything where people consider speaking v. reading, and doing something that doesn't become routine and predictable in thought or delivery.
- Better to listen to papers that people write, not to their off-the-cuff remarks at a roundtable.
- I appreciate the range of seminars that are available to choose from in the fall, and I also applaud the recent initiative to cap the number of participants in each seminar.
- The seminar approach (if run effectively) is perhaps the most useful for publishing academics and for graduate students (even though it can be quite intimidating for them).
- I would resist the addition of a single lecture or keynote address, as this would seem to be a step toward a more formal, slightly less collegial type of conference.
- The seminar workshop format, which is distinct to the SAA, is especially rewarding. My experience as a seminar participant has been uniformly positive.
- I wouldn't be in favor of a single lecture since I think part of the point of SAA is to get away from that kind of star system.

Suggestions:

- It would be nice if there were a way SAA could somehow create more panels that include real exchange between panelists (rather than simply the presenting of separate papers on a theme).
- Consider adding an additional (similar) event for early career faculty.

- It might be interesting to establish a lectureship by an individual outside of the field. He or she could come from a discipline related to the interests of the members, an easy example being a well-known historian, but possibly including the history-oriented fields of painting, dance, music, epidemiology, economics, or history itself.
- I've noticed auditor crowds have been swelling in seminars. Could the seminars be structured a little more inclusively, with this in mind? I could imagine adding half an hour to them, and asking seminar leaders that some more provision be made for them.
- Perhaps we should add an annual panel with younger scholars who have recently published a book, speaking about that project and what they learned or want to share from it, getting the word out.
- I believe in having something "special" if it is going to be a plenary, and/but it is hard to have a single lecture live up to that kind of demand without devoting substantial resources, and that makes it hard to please everyone. Having a "theme" for the whole conference might be valuable, at least from time to time, if the theme were capacious enough--and then could logically have a plenary either of the most influential/deep thinkers on that theme, or some new directions on that theme.
- Maybe we could consider setting a topic for submissions—and be willing to scrap the panel if we don't get enough good ones?
- Might there also be room for round table discussions on topics related to early and mid-career professional development?
- Honestly, I don't think many grad students wake up by 9 am. Maybe this [the grad student breakfast] should be rescheduled to a Grad Student Happy Hour?
- I wonder if it would be feasible to have a roundtable with equal numbers of graduate students and professors, with the intention to foster closer interactions between the two groups.
- I believe that the graduate-student breakfast is a really good practice.
- The idea of a single lecture doesn't sound that appealing, but a large round-table does — or perhaps a kind of super-seminar on a "hot" topic, with the papers available in advance. But rather than just trying to come up with possible models yourselves, why not ask the membership as a whole, inviting not just seminar and paper session proposals but also proposals for alternative scholarly activities (as long as they operate within certain parameters)?

3. The website

Most people like the new website a great deal; a number of respondents provided suggestions for improvement.

Comments:

- I really like the renovated website! MUCH MUCH better than before. Congratulations!
- In general, the archives section is excellent and very useful. Collecting seminar abstracts is a fantastic idea, and I hope it will be implemented.
- Finally, pages like "How the SAA seminars work" and "How hotels are chosen" communicate the transparent, collegial nature of SAA.
- My first interactions with the SAA website were frustrating in large part because the main page had a wealth of links that simply led to short paragraphs that gave the briefest of information on the topic. Thus, while the main page seemed to offer a great deal of information, the amount and quality of that information was actually quite low.

Suggestions:

- The website looks really good. Congratulations! The archives are really useful!!! And the links are excellent. My only question is whether there is a place to have a member's bulletin board or other ways for members with similar interests to contact each other.
- Is there a way that some of the work done in seminars—websites established, short abstracts or papers or whatever—might find a place on the SAA site
- I was surprised the REED Patrons and Performers website wasn't there, as it's such a useful, searchable guide to primary material.
- Also, the system is unfriendly to those of us outside North America, having incorporated a system which will not accept an address without a state or province chosen from a specific menu.
- I've even read the most recent SAA bulletin online before receiving it in the mail (it seems to me that a realistic cost-cutting measure for the SAA would be to publish the bulletin exclusively online). The reading experience isn't quite the same, but the online version always looks great.
- I think it would be wonderful to have the seminar leaders submit a brief report on what their seminar accomplished and the directions it took in relation to the original topic. I realize this would be difficult to organize and is likely impractical, but I think it is vital to show the inroads that the seminars make and to follow the strange development of the seminar from a short topic into a diverse communication between many scholars. I think the website needs to record the work that is being done each year.
- One feature to consider might be the creation of a discussion forum for each seminar group to use for communication purposes in the weeks leading up to the conference. Email also serves this purpose, of course, but a centralized forum (one per seminar) might be a way of sparking broader conversations and facilitating communication.
- When I clicked on the link "Give to the SAA," I found Paul's eloquent pitch, but no direct way of giving electronically. I think the more mechanisms for contributing the better, including direct debit. As someone who always forgets to write the check, I'd prefer the ability to arrange one time to make a monthly contribution.

4. Internal initiatives

There was strong and almost uniform support of recent internal initiatives.

Comments:

- It is difficult to articulate just how meaningful the availability of these awards is to senior graduate students and recent, untenured postdocs. The attention and respect the SAA pays to its graduate student and non-tenured members is, in my mind, the Association's most admirable feature.
- As a former recipient of a grad student travel grant, I greatly appreciate these initiatives. I also applaud funding for un- or underemployed members of our profession.
- I am not a fan of the travel grants programs: (1) it is extremely difficult for the SAA to make accurate assessments of the needs and abilities of grant applicants; (2) individuals and institutions can easily play political games, using the availability of SAA funds to save their own; (3) SAA meetings are not so costly that those really wishing to attend them, even if graduate students, cannot fund themselves if necessary when meetings are in their

geographical area (many graduate students are well-funded these days); (4) graduate students should not be encouraged to attend meetings outside their own geographical areas until they are almost finished their PhDs and so have real contributions to make and a real ability to profit significantly from the meetings; (5) pre-degree graduate students may in the end never finish their degrees (so “professionalization” funding is wasted on them, in terms of the future benefit to the profession).

Suggestions:

- What remain unrecognized are those (comparatively rare) articles that are not necessarily conceived as chapters for immediate books. Indeed, a pronounced trend at present is the publication of collections of articles written by scholars at all stages of their careers. A prize article may be a potentially break-through investigation or mode of thinking about a subject, or might simply be an example of superb work.
- I think a voluntary mentorship program might be worth exploring. . . . I’m sure there are many members of SAA who would be willing to work either one-on-one or with a small group of graduate students, first time participants, and others who are new to the organization or profession. What I imagine is something fairly low-commitment: exchanging e-mails, scheduling lunch or coffee at the annual meeting, or whatever else the mentor and participants would find manageable.
- Might we explore further funding liaisons with archives and libraries—perhaps instituting a research fellowship?
- Another possibility along the lines of the Leeds Barroll Prize would be a David Bevington prize for best graduate student seminar paper.

5. External initiatives

Respondents were divided about these, with several suggesting that external initiatives should not be a particular focus of our work.

Comments:

- I think we should be more global, more willing to participate, and more aware of opportunities that can help establish Shakespeare studies abroad through our visits or alliance, so long as we believe they are quality efforts.
- I would prefer that the SAA maintain its North American focus. I am very happy to have colleagues from outside North America involved in the SAA, but I don’t think fostering the research and teaching of Shakespeare in the rest of the world is part of the organization’s mandate, and I worry about the SAA spreading itself too thin.
- One thing I would *not* want to see happen is the SAA to hold its conference overseas.

Suggestions:

- Maybe we could add links to other national Shakespeare association homepages on the SAA page.
- An option might be to commit to featuring at least one panel, seminar, or performance each year that is specifically geared to questions related to teaching and researching Shakespeare in a global context.

- Perhaps an SAA seminar could combine papers from North American and international scholars and two separate seminars could take place – one at the SAA and one at a foreign university or conference – though each seminar would use the same set of papers. Each seminar could record its findings and communicate these findings through email conversation or blog.
- As someone involved in the fledgling London Shakespeare Centre, I'm keen to see SAA collaborate with other national organizations. To get something going, there could be a session at SAA 2011 where organizers/directors of Shakespeare associations in e.g. Germany, Japan and the U.K. spoke about their activities. (Obviously including the folk in Stratford!)
- It seems that the website may be a good resource for connecting scholars from around the world via discussion boards, wikis, and other resources that would foster communication and resource sharing.

6. Any other suggestions or comments

- What about a competition for best article emerging out of a SAA seminar that is then published in a leading journal like *Shakespeare Studies*.
- You might have a meeting at the Chicago conference – maybe 5:30-6:30 on Friday evening – inviting anyone interested to discuss the results with the self-study committee.
- One area of potential expansion for the meeting might be roundtables or lectures that are neither pedagogical nor scholarly, but rather focused on community or public engagement. One of my initiatives in my present position is “spreading Shakespeare to the community.”
- I don't think this would need to follow the model of the MLA, which passes resolutions on a wide variety of topics, but perhaps there is room for more activism with regard to the issues that affect us most. At the very least, I think it would be good for the SAA to begin a conversation with its membership on this topic.
- Is there any way of calling attention each year to a different “great scholarly work” of the past which is out of date in some areas but still useful? The profession is losing some of its ability to build on the work of the past, largely because we are so submerged in the torrent of the work of the present.
- I wish that we could find a better way than we have so far to intersect with the theater world—in terms of panels with performances included, in terms of presenting the differences between two performative traditions in interpreting a scene, etc. I know it is expensive but it seems to me it would be desirable to find a way to incorporate actors and some performance into the actual academic panels.